

Helston Community College

Safeguarding Newsletter

December 2022



SAFEGUARDING – EVERYBODY, EVERY DAY

As we approach the Christmas break, we are all looking forward to some time to rest and spend time with friends and family. However, we also know that Christmas can be a challenging time for many, especially with the added challenge of the cost of living crisis. We hope that you will find some of the information and advice in this newsletter useful.

The College continues to take the mental health and wellbeing of all members of its community very seriously. Over the last term, students and parents/carers took part in our Mental Health Awareness sessions, meeting a number of local agencies who support young people in the Helston area.

We also continue to take part in the United Against Bullying campaign, with all students being offered the chance to take part in a national survey. Our Student Leaders and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors have also been very active, raising awareness and providing support for students with any aspect of their wellbeing.

There will be further developments and opportunities next term, including some student wellbeing support through working with nature and animals. The College will also be taking part in 'The Blues Programme', run by Action for Children.



Meet the Safeguarding Team @ HCC

Our team has been trained to an advanced level on all aspects of safeguarding. They are available to speak to any student, parent or member of the community.



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Beach Parties

We previously wrote to you to share some advice from Devon & Cornwall Police regarding parties being held in the St. Ives and Hayle areas. Police are concerned that these parties expose young people to drug use, violence and criminality. We encourage all parents/carers to not allow their children to attend these parties and to share any concerns with Devon & Cornwall Police.

The Dangers of Vaping

Across the country, schools are seeing a huge increase in the number of students using vapes. This is a cause for concern as there has been very little research into the effects of regular vape-use, as well as the fact that the law in the UK requires someone to be aged 18 years or older to be able to purchase a vape. At Helston Community College (as at other Cornish schools), vapes are banned from our school site. Staff have the power to search students who are suspected of being in possession of a vape and where this is the case, students will receive a sanction.

A full list of items that are banned can be found in our Behaviour Policy [here](#)

Andrew Tate

Andrew Tate is a content creator who has become a major internet celebrity in 2022. However, he has now been banned by all major social media platforms and is widely regarded as a serious threat to young people, through his misogynist, racist and homophobic views. Tate has publicly advocated violence against women and has been accused of serious crimes in several countries. He is a close associate of the far-right extremist Stephen Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) and has a long history of close association with a variety of far-right figures in the UK and America.

Tate has been identified as particularly dangerous due to his skilful manipulation of social media and the internet. Also, his sinister views are mixed in with apparent 'good deeds', such as donations to charity. He takes advantage of young people by seeking to prey upon anxieties of loneliness and competition with peers, as well as portraying a life of glamour and riches that is available for all.

It is important that children are encouraged to question information that individuals like Tate seek to present and that his discriminatory ideas are challenged with facts.

You can learn more about Andrew Tate's background and views by clicking on the links to the right.



[Andrew Tate Factsheet](#)

[Safer Schools – Andrew Tate](#)

[Andrew Tate – BBC](#)

[Inside the violent, misogynistic world of Andrew Tate](#)

SNAPCHAT MEET UP – ALERT

What is Meet Up?

Snapchat's newest feature adds an extra layer to their existing Snap Map feature by allowing users to get directions to their friend's exact location. It pairs with Apple Maps and Google Maps apps, which show how long it would take someone to walk, drive, or use public transport to reach the address.

Essentially – with the click of a few buttons, anyone is able to gain access to your workplace, school, or home address and the fastest route to get there.

'Meet Up' is accessed by visiting a user's profile to look at their location on Snap Map (a feature that is on by default). Once on the map, a user can access Meet Up by pressing the user's Bitmoji (a cartoon version of the user that appears on their live location on the map) and choosing directions from either Apple or Google Maps.

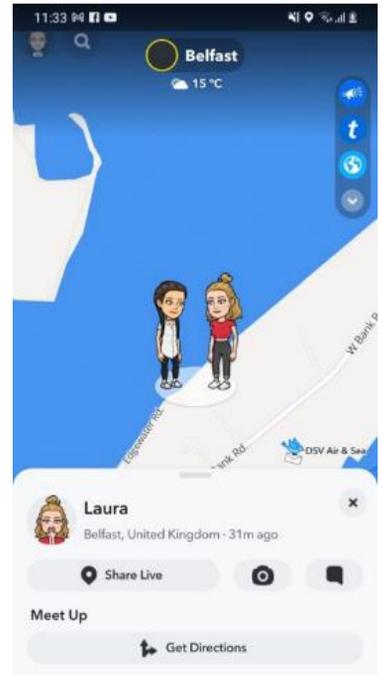
There has been widespread backlash at the release of this feature from people of all ages online, with many labelling it as 'creepy' and warning others of its existence.

What are the Risks?

While Snapchat created previous features like Live Location to mitigate risks, there does not seem to be the same intention behind Meet Up. As with any location sharing app or platform, there is always a risk to sharing this personal information. Live location and/or addresses should only be shared with trusted family and friends.

Revealing location or personal address could result in:

- Random visits or appearances from other users who have not been invited.
- Another user screenshotting the address, using a second device to capture location information, or sharing this information with others without the user's knowledge.
- A young person being coerced or pressured into sharing the feature with someone they don't know.
- Young people who are in unhealthy relationships or friendships unknowingly exposing their location to their abusers.
- Unwanted visits from bullies, abusers or stalkers that could escalate into forms of harassment, threats, or assault.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about DISCORD

AGE RATING

13+

Servers and channels marked as 'NSFW' require users to be 18 or older to join.

Discord is a free app which allows users to communicate in real time via text, video or voice chat. Available on desktop and mobile devices, it was originally designed to help gamers cooperate – but has evolved into a more general networking platform for a range of online communities, discussing topics like TV series, music, Web3 and more. Discord is organised around closed groups, referred to as 'servers'. To join a server, users must be invited or provided with a unique link. It's a space for users to interact with friends, meet others with shared interests and collaborate privately online – but it's also a place where young people can be exposed to risks if the right precautions aren't taken.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CYBERBULLYING

Discord's easy accessibility and connectivity, unfortunately, makes it an ideal place for cyberbullying to occur – especially as audio and video streams disappear once they've ended, meaning that bullying could take place without leaving any evidence. Closed groups can also be created, giving young people the opportunity to exclude their peers or send cruel messages without adult oversight.

DIFFICULT TO MODERATE

Like many private communication apps, Discord's real-time messaging can be difficult to control. The system enables content moderation through each individual server – so different groups can set their own rules for what's acceptable, and some groups may not monitor for unsuitable content. Anything that happens in an audio or video stream is also virtually untraceable once the stream has concluded.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Discord mainly hosts private groups, making it easier for unsuitable or explicit content to be shared on channels. Pornography, racism and inappropriate language can be found in some groups. Server owners are required to add an age-restriction gate to channels where 18+ content is being shared – but this solution isn't foolproof, as the platform doesn't always verify users' ages when they sign up.

ACCESSIBLE TO PREDATORS

On many chat platforms, users can lie about their age or true identity – and Discord is no exception. Predators have attempted to abuse the platform by using it to contact and communicate with underage users – by initially chatting with a child on an age-appropriate channel, for example. While Discord has improved its safety settings, some users will still try to bypass them for malicious reasons.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Discord does have strict Terms of Service and Community Guidelines to protect its users – but, sadly, not everyone adheres to them. Criminal activity including grooming, hate speech, harassment, exploitative content, doxing and extremist or violent material have all been found on Discord servers over the last two years. In 2020, Discord received almost 27,000 reports of illegal activity on the platform.

Advice for Parents & Carers

REVIEW SAFETY SETTINGS

Discord has a series of safety settings, enabling users to choose who can direct message them or send them friend requests. Your child's experience on Discord will be much safer if the app's privacy and safety settings are configured to only allow messages or friend requests from server members. This will minimise the chances of potential predators from outside the group contacting them.

EXPLAIN AGE FILTERING

While Discord requires users to be at least 13 to sign up, many servers geared towards older users are flagged as NSFW (not safe for work), which indicates they probably contain material that's inappropriate for children. It can be easy to click through settings without properly reviewing them, so ensure your child understands why age filtering is important and that it's there to protect them.



SCREEN OUT EXPLICIT CONTENT

In the privacy and safety settings, Discord users are offered the ability to filter direct messages for inappropriate content: a setting that should be enabled if your child uses the platform. Discord automatically tries to flag images that are explicit, but the setting must be manually enabled for text. If a young user is sent explicit content in a direct message, Discord will scan and (if necessary) delete it.



MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY

It's wise to regularly review your child's activity on Discord. This can include checking their safety settings to ensure they're correctly enabled, talking about which servers they've joined and reviewing some of their friends and direct messages. Ask if anything has made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Things can change quickly online, so plan routine check-ins and follow up frequently.



DISCUSS GOOD ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

The anonymity offered by the internet often leads people to communicate more openly online and behave differently than they would at school or home. It's crucial to bear in mind, though, that every internet user is still a real person. Talk to your child about the severe and lasting consequences that cyberbullying or exchanging inappropriate material online can have in the real world.



HAVE CANDID CONVERSATIONS

It can sometimes be awkward to discuss topics like grooming, pornography, racism or explicit content with your child – but it's important to ensure they're aware of the harms these things can pose. Talking openly about these subjects is a great way to help your child feel more comfortable about coming to you if they experience an unwanted encounter on Discord (or anywhere else online).



Meet Our Expert

Coral Cripps is a Canadian-born, London-based tech journalist at gmw3.com: a website specialising in all things Web3, gaming and XR (extended reality). With a focus on brands and culture, she researches and writes about the ways that our current innovations – including the metaverse and Web3 – are impacting people, places and things.



National Online Safety®

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Sources: <https://www.dailymail.com/tech/danger-of-discord-6-ways-to-protect-your-child> <https://support.discord.com> <https://www.metasploit.com/online-discord-is-a-toxin-for-gamers-and-wasnt-expected> <https://discord.com/discord-detects-thousands-of-violent-extremist-and-cen-accounts>



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- ALERT

Omegle was first launched in 2009, but has recently become more popular again, with 'copycat' apps also now widely available – the website/app allows children to make/receive video calls and exchange instant messages with users on their 'friends' list, but also with strangers from the internet.

Omegle does not appear to have powerful moderation. It also does not require registration or have age verification, which makes young people a potential target for abuse online. Its site states "predators have been known to use Omegle, so please be careful."

Children and young people may be asked by strangers to share their name, age and location. So, it's also important to talk to your child about sharing personal information online with strangers.

A [BBC investigation](#) found sexually explicit videos and live streams involving minors as young as 7 or 8 which spread across the site during the Covid-19 pandemic. BBC alerted the relevant authorities. However, there is still a risk of users unexpectedly coming across [pornography and other types of inappropriate content](#).

According to the BBC's investigation, schools, police forces and governments have issued warnings about Omegle in the UK, US, France, Norway, Canada and Australia. There were also investigations into online child abuse on Omegle along with reports of racism, extremist views, scams and cyberbullying.

While this website is filtered at school, we encourage you to be proactive in monitoring your child's use of social media. The image above shows how the Omegle app may appear, but this can be altered on some devices.



Support for children and parents/carers

CEOP is a law enforcement agency and is here to help keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. We help thousands of children and young people every year. **CEOP are unable to respond to reports about bullying, fake accounts or account hacking.**

We are here to help and give advice, and you can make a report directly to us if you are worried about online sexual abuse or something has happened online which has made you, or someone else, feel unsafe, scared or worried.

If you make a report to us about sexual abuse or grooming online it will be read by one of our Child Protection Advisors who will get in contact with you on the phone number or email address that you give to us to make sure that you are safe. They will also discuss with you what will happen next. Please try not to worry, you have done nothing wrong and we will do all we can to help.

We work together with lots of other professionals whose jobs are also to make sure children are safe. This includes other police agencies. If a crime has been committed we will work together and use our specialist skills to identify the person or people responsible and bring them into the criminal justice system.

The [CEOP Education website](#) also has information and advice to help you to stay safe if something has happened to you online.

Christmas Support

We know that, despite all of its joys and happiness, Christmas can also bring additional difficulties, stress and worry. Therefore, we thought it would be useful to remind you of some sources of support in Cornwall, while school and other services may be closed.

A good starting point for support is the **Early Help Hub**. You can find a list of the different support services they offer at [Early help - Cornwall Council](#) (01872 322277)

Your GP will also be able to signpost you to specific support that may help.

If at any time you feel that someone is at risk of immediate harm, you should contact the **Multi-Agency Referral Unit** on **0300 123 1116** or the Emergency Services on 101/999.

For specific areas of need, you may find the below useful:

Need	Agency	Contact	
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING/ MENTAL HEALTH	 Kooth	http://www.kooth.com/ http://www.xenzone.com/	
	 NHS Mental Health Helpline	Mental Health Helpline for Urgent Help - NHS (www.nhs.uk) 0800 038 5300	
	 Child Adolescent Mental health Service (CAMHS)	CAMHS Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (cornwallft.nhs.uk)	
	 Young Minds <small>The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing</small>	YoungMinds Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People YoungMinds	
	 Cornwall Minds	Welcome to Cornwall Mind - Cornwall Mind	
	 Action for Children	Kernow Connect	https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-we-can-help/our-local-services/find-our-services-near-you/kernow-connect/ 01872 321486
		Action for Children Webchat	1:1 chat - Parent Talk (actionforchildren.org.uk)
	 Childline <small>ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME</small>	Childline	Childline Childline 0800 1111
	 Whatever you're facing We're here to listen <small>Call the helpline on 116 123 email jo@samaritans.org</small>	Samaritans	Samaritans Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy Here to listen 116 123
 Young People Cornwall <small>Making Waves</small>	Young People Cornwall	Making Waves - Young People Cornwall 01872 22244	
BEREAVEMENT	 Penhaligon's Friends	Penhaligons Friends - A Cornish charity supporting bereaved children & young people	
DRUG/ALCOHOL MISUSE	 YZUP <small>WISC - drugs & alcohol</small>	https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/	
SEXUAL HEALTH	 brook <small>Cornwall and Isles of Scilly</small>	0300 30 30 714	

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nestling under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games.

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'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

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CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnight rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

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LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register: entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

CHECK THE SPECS

To avoid let-downs, check a game's specs before buying – especially for PC or Mac, where games often need a particular graphics chip or processor to work. Sites like systemrequirementslab.com can scan your computer to see if it will run certain games properly. On consoles, make sure you're buying the right version: some newer Xbox or PlayStation games won't play on older consoles.

MONITOR IN-GAME COMMS

Voice chat with friends is part of the fun of modern gaming – but danger lurks here too. Many titles have open chat systems, meaning that children could speak to strangers or hear adult language and verbal abuse when games get particularly competitive. Using a shared family area (as opposed to alone in bedrooms) for online gaming is a good way to keep an occasional ear on what's being said.

BE WARY OF GIFTS

Titles like Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have in-game currencies, which can be earned through progress in the game – but can also be bought with real money. A common scam is for a young player to be offered currency if they click a link, visit a certain site or contact another user directly. Warn your child about such offers; they should show you if they're in any doubt over an in-game gift.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has written regularly about internet safety issues.



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MENTAL HEALTH

On Tuesday 11 October Year 13 students had a fantastic opportunity to meet 16 outside mental health support agencies. These agencies were invited in to give advice and guidance to all students about where they can go for support. Students engaged with the agencies really well and asked some brilliant questions. Agencies were extremely pleased with how the event went and stated 'you have such amazing students here at Helston Community College'. For any further advice and guidance please see the Personal Development section of our website.

ONLINE SAFETY AWARENESS

At Helston Community College, we have an extensive set of procedures and support strategies for the safeguarding of our students. However, we are always looking to develop this further. As part of this development, this half term, we have focused on student online safety and awareness of the associated risks.

Students in Years 7-11 have had an online safety awareness assembly which is being further supported by online safety lessons, as part of their PSHE and Computing curricula.

As part of this awareness, we have sent home some information, which we think may be of use to parents and carers in supporting young people.

We continue to encourage all students and parents/carers to report any concerns they may have to the Helston Community College Safeguarding Team.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping the students at Helston Community College safe.



On Wednesday 29 November, Mrs Mugford, Miss Stringer and the Anti-Bullying Team took part in official, accredited training from The Diana Award. As a College we hosted the event for 8 other Cornish secondary schools. Students took part in a range of activities to gain knowledge and understanding of types of bullying behaviour and how to tackle these. These students are now official Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

The BBC Spotlight broadcast covered this event!

ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

14 - 18 NOVEMBER 2022



As part of 'Anti-Bullying Week' the College has held many activities and events to raise awareness of Anti-Bullying. On Monday, we held our first ever Odd Sock Day which was to celebrate what makes everyone unique. All the students really enjoyed themselves and got really creative! Then on the Tuesday we held a Community Awareness Session where parents/carers were invited into the College to learn about different types of bullying, the support available both inside and outside of College. They also met some of our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. The event proved really useful, and we can not wait to do another session in the near future. We also held assemblies for all year groups across the week led by our Year 13 students Sadie and Adam.

In these assemblies, they covered what is bullying, the different types of bullying, how to reach out, and also what we are doing for Anti-Bullying Week. We had a variety of tutor time activities, from a teacher awareness video, to looking at different bullying scenarios and discussions around these. We also launched our new student support room where students at lunchtimes can go and speak to a member of the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

team for support and guidance. Kindness Tokens were given out by the Ambassadors when they saw a student being polite, kind or positive which then accumulated into a Praise Point. Lunchtime activities also took place every day where students had the opportunity to get involved with: Kindness Rocks, Reaching Out Hands and Pledge Shields. We will be continuing to do these activities every lunchtime in the Anti-Bullying Room (Meeting Room 1 on South Site).

Anti-Bullying & Kindness Ambassadors Team Lead Adam said, "I am really proud of what we have achieved so far, and we are starting to make a difference within the College and the community. The team has done a brilliant job this week and should all be really proud of themselves for how much work and commitment they have put into their roles."

The Anti-Bullying Team

**STOP
BULLYING**